

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended): A communications method, comprising:

enabling instant messaging communication between a sender and at least one recipient through an instant messaging host according to an instant messaging protocol; and

~~enabling video communication between the sender and the recipient through the instant messaging host.~~

receiving, at the instant messaging host according to a protocol for transferring video instant messages, a video instant message directed to the at least one recipient after recording of the video instant message has been completed by the sender; and

sending, according to the protocol for transferring video instant messages, the video instant message from the instant messaging host to the at least one recipient for playback.

2. (Original): The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving and authenticating a text instant from the sender at the instant messaging host.

3. (Original): The method of claim 2 wherein authenticating comprises identifying a screen name associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

4. (Original): The method of claim 3 wherein authenticating comprises identifying an IP address associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

5. (Original): The method of claim 1 further comprising determining capabilities of the recipient at the instant messaging host.

6. (Original): The method of claim 5 wherein determining comprises identifying hardware associated with the recipient.
7. (Original): The method of claim 5 wherein determining comprises identifying software associated with the recipient.
8. (Original): The method of claim 5 further comprising reporting the capabilities of the recipient to the sender.
9. (Original): The method of claim 8 wherein the sender displays a user interface according to the capabilities of the recipient.
10. (Original): The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving, at the instant messaging host, a request to establish video communication.
11. (Original): The method of claim 10 wherein the request is from the sender.
12. (Original): The method of claim 10 wherein the request is from the recipient.
13. (Original): The method of claim 10 further comprising authenticating the request.
14. (Original): The method of claim 13 wherein authenticating comprises identifying a screen name associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.
15. (Original): The method of claim 13 wherein authenticating comprises identifying an IP address associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

16. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein enabling video communication comprises establishing a generic signaling interface channel, a control channel, and a video channel between the sender and the recipient.

17. (Original): The method of claim 16 wherein the control channel comprises a TCP/IP socket.

18. (Original): The method of claim 16 wherein the video channel comprises a UDP channel.

19. (Original): The method of claim 16 wherein the video channel comprises a TCP channel.

20. (Currently Amended): A communications apparatus comprising an instant messaging host configured to:

enable instant messaging communication between a sender and at least one recipient
according to an instant messaging protocol; and

~~enable video communication between the sender and the recipient.~~

receive, at the instant messaging host according to a protocol for transferring video instant messages, a video instant message directed to the at least one recipient after recording of the video instant message has been completed by the sender; and

send, according to the protocol for transferring video instant messages, the video instant message from the instant messaging host to the at least one recipient for playback.

21. (Currently Amended): A computer program, stored on a computer readable medium, comprising instructions for:

enabling instant messaging communication between a sender and at least one recipient through an instant messaging host according to an instant messaging protocol; and

~~enabling video communication between the sender and the recipient through the instant messaging host.~~

receiving, at the instant messaging host according to a protocol for transferring video instant messages, a video instant message directed to the at least one recipient after recording of the video instant message has been completed by the sender; and

sending, according to the protocol for transferring video instant messages, the video instant message from the instant messaging host to the at least one recipient for playback.

22. (Original): The computer program of claim 21, wherein the computer readable medium comprises a disc.

23. (Original): The computer program of claim 21, wherein the computer readable medium comprises a client device.

24. (Original): The computer program of claim 21, wherein the computer readable medium comprises a host device.

25. (Original): The computer program of claim 21, wherein the computer readable medium comprises a propagated signal.

26. (New): The method of claim 1 further comprising authenticating the video instant message.

27. (New): The method of claim 26 wherein authenticating comprises identifying a screen name associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

28. (New): The method of claim 27 wherein authenticating comprises identifying an IP address associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

29. (New): The method of claim 1 further comprising moderating an instant messaging session during which the video instant message is received and sent.

30. (New): A communications method, comprising:

- establishing an instant messaging communications session between a sender and a recipient through an instant messaging host according to an instant messaging protocol;

- receiving, at an instant messaging client, an instant message that is directed from the sender to the recipient;

- receiving, as a component part of the instant message, a discrete video instant message that has been recorded by the sender; and

- receiving an indication from the user that triggers the sending of the video instant message after recording of the video instant message is completed by the sender.

31. (New): A communications apparatus comprising an instant messaging client configured to:

- establish an instant messaging communications session between a sender and a recipient through an instant messaging host;

- receive, at an instant messaging client, an instant message that is directed from the sender to the recipient;

- receive, as a component part of the instant message, a discrete video instant message that has been recorded by the sender; and

- receive an indication from the user that triggers the sending of the video instant message after recording of the video instant message is completed by the sender.

32. (New): A communications method, comprising:

- establishing an instant messaging communications session between a sender and a recipient through an instant messaging host according to an instant messaging protocol; and

- in the instant messaging communications session between the sender and the recipient:

- receiving, according to a protocol for transferring video instant messages, a video instant message from the sender and forwarding the video instant message to the recipient; and

receiving, according to the protocol for transferring video instant messages, a reply video instant message from the recipient in response to the video instant message forwarded to the recipient from the sender;
wherein the video instant message and the reply video instant message are discrete communications.

33. (New): The method of claim 31 wherein the discrete communications are independent messages.

34. (New): The method of claim 31 wherein the discrete communications are discontinuous and self-contained messages.

35. (New): A communications apparatus comprising an instant messaging host configured to:
establish an instant messaging communications session between a sender and a recipient through an instant messaging host according to an instant messaging protocol; and
in the instant messaging communications session between the sender and the recipient:
receive, according to a protocol for transferring video instant messages, a video instant message from the sender and forwarding the video instant message to the recipient; and
receive, according to the protocol for transferring video instant messages, a reply video instant message from the recipient in response to the video instant message forwarded to the recipient from the sender;
wherein the video instant message and the reply video instant message are discrete communications.